

matthew finn

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e d u c a t i o n

MFA Graphic Design, 2010

Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia

BFA Graphic Design, 1999

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

p r o f e s s i o n a l e x p e r i e n c e

Optima Group Inc.

Fairfield, CT
8/2022– present
creative director

Since joining Optima Group, I've been able to fully reinsert myself back into the design studio. Optima Group has given me the opportunity to work directly with clients, manage a team of designers, and art direct multiple corporate video and photoshoots for large financial institutions. From a design standpoint, I've been tasked with redesigning multiple websites, rebranding and expanding client marketing materials, and creating various digital and print deliverables for multiple clients. Optima Group's client base consists of some of the top wealth management companies in the country. All of which are looking to strengthen their brand, expand their client base, and improve their messaging. My main objective as Creative Director is to strengthen each client's branding while addressing their individual needs and challenges.

Rasmussen University

online
7/2021– present
adjunct professor, graphic design

Courses: Collateral Design, Sketching for Designers

Rasmussen University has challenged me to work with a diverse group of students through a unique online teaching system. Each student comes from a different background and has a unique life experience. The courses are set up through Blackboard and allow professors the ability to customize their lectures and teaching styles in a structured course framework.

Rally Labs

Warwick, NY
12/2018 – 12/2023
freelance art director

Rally Labs creates, markets, and distributes a pain relief medicine called Blowfish. Working as their freelance art director allowed me to work closely with the chief marketing officer to design multiple social media campaigns emphasizing their brand. The campaigns can be viewed on Instagram, SnapChat, and FaceBook and consists of static ads, animated gifs and video ads. The online campaigns have reached millions on social media. The campaigns were highly successful and generated thousands of click throughs and sales doubled after I joined as art director. Additionally, I designed two new websites and I developed multiple email campaigns which were sent to over 50,000 recipients in the US and Canada. In addition to the digital materials, I have also designed packaging, shipping boxes and promotional items all reinforcing the Blowfish brand.

Tufts University

online
8/2022– 12/2023
adjunct professor, graphic design

Courses: The Digital Image, Graphic Design 1, Graphic Design 2

Tufts University gave me the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students through a synchronous online teaching environment. Their students come from a variety of locations, with unique backgrounds and varying ages. The experience of working online has been rewarding because it has opened me to new educational challenges a classroom does not offer.

County College of Morris

Randolph, NJ
7/2022– 12/2022
adjunct professor, graphic design

Courses: 2D Design

County College of Morris gave me the experience of working with a unique group of students at the junior college level. The students come from a variety of backgrounds and varying ages. The course educates a variety of majors (architecture, interior design, industrial design, graphic design, etc.) in basic 2D foundations. Students worked both analog (hand drawing and painting) and digitally (digital photography and Photoshop) to create a variety of design projects.

Village of Warwick

Warwick, NY
10/2018 – 6/2023
architectural review board

In the Fall of 2018, I was elected to the Architectural Review Board for the Village of Warwick, NY. The goal of this board is to ensure that new and existing structures within the Village of Warwick uphold the visual and aesthetic qualities the village has worked so hard to develop. As a member, I will work with the board to review architectural design submissions, make design recommendations and work with existing members of the community to uphold the visual characteristics of Warwick. The board is primarily made up of architectural designers, so my graphic design expertise brings a new perspective to the board. My professional work with brand design and development along with my experience of being a corporate designer for an architecture firm made me a desirable candidate for the position.

Marymount Manhattan College

New York, NY
8/2021 – 6/2022
visiting assistant professor,
graphic design

**Courses: Digital Imaging, Typography, Graphic Design I & II,
Senior Seminar, NYC Seminar**

As a Visiting Assistant Professor, Graphic Design at Marymount Manhattan College, I taught a variety of design courses at varying skill levels. The classes I taught ranged from entry to upper-level design courses covering various topics relating to fine art and the graphic design field. As part of my service to the college I have been an academic advisor for over 20 graphic design majors. During the Fall of 2021, I played an integral role in developing a new BFA degree offering for the graphic design concentration. Through the process I assisted in revising the program structure, reconfigured and renamed class listings and developed three new courses. My past experiences at previous teaching institutions and my professional art director experience played a key role in my suggestions.

William Paterson University

Wayne, NJ
8/2017 – 6/2021
assistant professor, graphic design

**Courses: 2D Design, Introduction to Graphic Design, Typography: Form and
Application, Advanced Typography, Intro to Publication, Sustainable Design,
Senior Thesis, Graduate Thesis I & II**

As an Assistant Professor, Graphic Design at William Paterson University, I have been given the opportunity to teach multiple design courses at various levels. The classes I teach range from entry to upper-level design courses covering various topics relating to fine art and the graphic design field. My service to the university has included academic advising for over 50 art majors per semester, managing the Foundation Portfolio Review which included over 40 students each semester, reinventing the portfolio review process to shift to an online system in response to COVID, attending and speaking at multiple open house and recruitment events, recruitment outreach at various junior colleges and high schools, faculty senate representative, as well as participating on multiple university committees. As part my scholarship I continue to practice as a freelance graphic designer for select clients. I also present papers and chair sessions yearly at art and design conferences. My writing has been published in a national art journal. I also continue to research sustainable design thinking, graphic design history as well as the role of technology and the human process in art and design. My research has inspired a photography series, contributed to the development of a new course offering and has helped enlighten various student thesis papers.

St. Thomas Aquinas College

Sparkill, NY

8/2011 – 5/2017

visiting assistant professor
of graphic design**Courses: 2D Design, 3D Design, Intro to Computer Art, Digital Studio, Typography, Web Design, History of Graphic Design, Pre-Press Production, Packaging: Designing for Sustainability, Art Direction, Senior Portfolio, Intro to Sculpture**

As a Visiting Professor of Graphic Design at St. Thomas Aquinas College, I was given the opportunity to teach multiple design courses at various levels. The classes I taught ranged from entry to upper-level design courses covering various topics related to the graphic design field. One of the many objectives I strive to include in my teaching is the real world collaborative experience of working with a client on a tangible project. Since joining the faculty at St. Thomas Aquinas, I have brought multiple client projects into the classroom through collaboration between various departments on campus. Every client project has presented the students with a diverse set of challenges that could never be simulated by a typical classroom project. In my short time at St. Thomas Aquinas I feel I have helped advance the quality of student work and I will continue to find new and innovative ways in which to create a valuable learning experience for each student. In addition to my teaching responsibilities, I also participate in various service aspects within the college. I am a member of the Exhibition Committee which selects and oversees artists and exhibitions that take place in the campus art gallery. I am also a member of the Faculty Development Committee where I review proposals and select candidates for yearly research grants. Most recently I was selected to join the college's Sustainability Committee, which is a new initiative developed by the president to facilitate sustainable practices throughout the college campus. I fully participate in open house events and other student recruitment opportunities for the college. Lastly, I am the faculty representative for the Alpha Chi professional fraternity where I select students and facilitate the various operations involved with the fraternity. As part of my continuing research and education I continue to practice as a freelance graphic designer for select clients. I am also actively researching two topics of interest related to design; sustainable design thinking, as well as the role of technology and the human process in design.

University of North Florida

Jacksonville, FL

8/2010 – 8/2011

visiting professor of graphic design

Courses: 2D Design, Basic Computer Imaging, Typography Studio, Pre-Press Production

In my role as a Visiting Professor of Graphic Design and Digital Media at the University of North Florida, I taught two foundation design courses which included Basic Computer Imaging and 2 Dimensional Design. Additionally, as part of the limited access Graphic Design program, I taught Typography Studio and Pre-Press Production. In addition, to teaching, one of my responsibilities at UNF was to take part in the limited access student reviews. During the review process my fellow colleagues and I reviewed student portfolios and provided constructive feedback before determining who would be accepted into the design program. Additionally, in a collaborative effort to bring the real world aspect to the classroom, my students worked with the Childhood Development Department to create two distinct sets of children's books. The first set of books centered around the theme of children making appropriate decisions in various social settings. The second set of books concentrated on basic concepts such as colors, numbers, the alphabet, and positional words. The latter was ultimately produced as part of a grant sponsored program for the university to help educate underprivileged children in the Jacksonville area. Each book series challenged my students to develop original characters, organize information logically, and create a unified visual system throughout the series. In the end, the projects were a success for both the student's development and introducing the idea of collaboration between departments within the university.

Savannah College of Art and Design

Savannah, GA
1/2010 – 5/2010
teaching intern

As part of my masters program at SCAD, I teamed with two professors in two distinct undergraduate design courses to complete my teaching internship. This experience educated me on how to engage and motivate students to reach their full potential. During both internships I gave lectures, introduced new projects, and provided creative feedback and assistance with their various projects. My preparation to become a professor of graphic design was greatly influenced by this educational experience.

Savannah State University

Savannah, GA
7/2009 – 11/2009
web design contract employee

Savannah State University provided me the opportunity to completely redesign their website from the ground up. Revamping the website presented two diverse challenges from both a design and an organizational perspective. Throughout the process I was successful in creating a contemporary look and feel while also setting up a new structure for the organization and navigation of the site. Once completed, the website was very well received by the website committee, faculty, and staff at the university.

Democracy Data & Communications

Alexandria, VA
5/2004 – 6/2009
associate art director
& contract employee

During my five years with DDC, I had the opportunity to work on multiple projects that serviced the public affairs departments within many Fortune 500 companies and top Washington associations, in addition to maintaining DDC's corporate marketing strategies. I developed websites, brochures and other collateral for many political action initiatives ranging from grassroots to communications with elected officials; created logos, websites and monthly newsletters for political action committees; designed company and product brochures and helped maintain the corporate website for DDC. As Associate Art Director I was responsible for managing a group of in-house designers and outside freelancers. Additionally, I was also given the task of developing a new creative process within the department to facilitate changes in workflow. While in this role, I extensively worked with designers, writers, web developers, project managers, and executives to streamline complex design projects.

Neo Design

Washington, DC
5/2002 – 1/2004
graphic designer

Neo Design provided me the opportunity to design various types of projects with a wide range of clients. I developed logos and company business systems, designed and programmed websites, produced short multimedia promotional pieces, created numerous promotional packages for a local theater, produced ad campaigns, and designed reports and brochures for numerous clients. Our client base included small businesses, non-profit groups, and large corporations. In my role at Neo Design, I had direct interaction with each client throughout the design process to ensure a successful outcome.

SmithGroup Inc.

Detroit, MI
6/2000 – 10/2001
corporate graphic designer

While employed at SmithGroup I worked on all corporate projects relating to the SmithGroup brand as well as selected outside client projects. Some of the projects include but are not limited to, SmithGroup Inc. Annual Report, Holiday Calendar, Market Sector Brochure System, Announcement Cards, and the redesign of the corporate website. During this time, I also created a Corporate Identity Manual and maintained identity standards by overseeing the printing of our marketing materials and business system. I also worked with various architects and project managers to create project presentation materials and signage concepts for the Wayne County Metropolitan Airport project.

**c o n f e r e n c e s , e x h i b i t i o n s ,
p u b l i c a t i o n s & w o r k s h o p s**

- SECAC 2025 - Presenter - *Packaging from a Different Perspective: Approaching Package Design from a Sustainable, UX, and Design Thinking Angle* - Cincinnati, OH, 10/2025
- SECAC 2024 - Presenter - *Teaching is a Journey, Not a Day Trip* - Atlanta, GA, 10/2024
- SECAC 2022 - Session Chair - *CHOPPED: Graphic Design Edition* - Baltimore, MD, 10/2022
- *MMXXI, Faculty Art Exhibition* - Marymount Manhattan College - New York, NY, 11/2021
- Alphonse Mucha: Art Nouveau / Nouvelle Femme - *Art Inquiries* - published review of an Alphonse Mucha exhibition at the Poster House, NYC - Fall 2020
- SECAC 2020 - Presenter - *As Green As They Wanna Be: Utilizing design thinking and problem solving to address sustainable design challenges* - Virtual, 10/2020
- *Faculty Exhibition* - William Paterson University - Wayne, NJ, 9/2020
- SECAC 2019 - Presenter - *Real World Clients, Real World Challenges, Real World Rewards: Exploring Client Based Projects In the Classroom* - Chattanooga, TN, 10/2019
- SECAC 2019 - Session Chair - *Flip the Demo: Rethinking Software Education in the Classroom* - Chattanooga, TN, 10/2019
- *Faculty Exhibition* - William Paterson University - Wayne, NJ, 10/2019
- Faculty Panel Discussion - Presenter - William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ, 11/2018
- SECAC: Y'ALL - Session Chair and Presenter - *The Power of Typography: Amplified by Sound and Movement* - Birmingham, AL, 10/2018
- SECAC: Microscopes & Megaphones - Presenter - *Art Department Promotion and Awareness Through Public Art Installations* - Cleveland, OH, 10/2017
- *Once Upon a Time* - Community Art Exhibition - Albert Wisner Public Library - Warwick, NY, 9/2018
- *Faculty Exhibition* - William Paterson University - Wayne, NJ, 9/2017
- *Warwick Through Time: Sesquicentennial Celebration* - Community Art Exhibition - Albert Wisner Public Library - Warwick, NY, 6/2017
- *Thought, Process, Action: Faculty Research and Creative Work Exhibition* - St. Thomas Aquinas College, 11/2016
- SECAC: Confluence - Presenter - *Sustainable Design Thinking* - Pittsburgh, PA, 10/2015
- Open Engagement Conference - Presenter - *Sustainable Design* - Queens Museum, NY, 5/2014

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p u b l i c a t i o n s & w o r k s h o p s c o n t .**

- *Art Faculty Exhibition* - St. Thomas Aquinas College, 11/2013
- Reclaim + Remake Symposium - Catholic Univ. of America, 4/2013
- *MFA Graphic Design Exhibition* - SCAD, 5/2010
- *Benetton Collaboration Exhibition* - SCAD, 5/2010
- Jonathan Barnbrook Workshop - SCAD, 1/2009
- Artistic Honors Scholarship - SCAD, 3/2008
- *BFA Graphic Design Exhibition* - WMU, 4/1999
- *Advanced Ceramic Exhibition* - WMU, 2/1999
- Student Purchase Award - WMU, 4/1998
- *Student Art Exhibition* - WMU, 4/1998
- Studio 23 Group Art Exhibition, 12/1996